

## Short Notes.

### HABITS OF THE DRONGO.

It may often be noted that the common racket tailed Drongo, *Dissemurus platyurus*, has a habit of accompanying the common monkeys known as the K'ra (*Macacus cynomolgus*) as they wander along among the branches of the trees; so conspicuous indeed is this that the Malays sometimes call the bird Hamba Kerah; the slave of the monkey. Why the birds did so puzzled me for some time till I noticed that the monkeys as they go through the foliage disturb many insects such as the grasshoppers, moths and mantises. The drongo which always takes its food on the wing waits in a more or less open space generally behind the advancing monkey and catches the insects as they fly so that it is the monkey who is serving the drongo by driving its prey for it rather than the drongo who is the slave of the monkey.

### THE SHORT-EARED OWL IN SINGAPORE.

A fine specimen of the short-eared owl (*Asio accipitrinus* Pall.) was captured in December last in the Alexandra Road, in Singapore, by a native who brought it to the Gardens where it is still alive. This owl has a very wide distribution, occurring in Europe including England, Siberia, China, India and Ceylon, but has never apparently been previously obtained in the Malay Peninsula. The bird was identified by Mr. A. L. Butler.

### THE SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS.

It is well known that two species of Rhinoceros occur in the Malay Peninsula, the Javanese one-horned species *R. javanicus* and the two horned *R. sumatrensis*, but though many of these animals have been recorded as having been trapped or shot in various parts of the Native States, there are no records as to where the different species have been obtained and it is very seldom that any portions of the specimens have been preserved. Lately, however, two examples of *R. sumatrensis* have been on

view at the Botanic Gardens and some notes on them may prove of interest. Both were females trapped at S'tiawan in Perak. The biggest and evidently the oldest measured 4 feet 8 inches at the shoulder with a length of 7 feet 4 inches to the root of the tail which was 22 inches long. The hide is covered everywhere with stiff black hairs, longest on the ears. In both the front horn was very short, a mere conical process, and the only trace of the second horn was a small rough plate in the older one and even that was absent in the second one. The animals were both of a quiet and inoffensive disposition, allowing themselves to be stroked and patted and readily fed from the hand although they had been quite recently caught. They ate sweet potatoes, sugar cane, champedak, fruits and leaves, and the leaves of the Mahang Putih (*Macaranga hypoleuca*) and various species of *Ficus* especially the *Waringin* (*Ficus Benjamina*), and when they wanted food call for it with a kind of whistle or squeak much out of proportion to the size of the animal. They made no other noise except by snorting now and then but in the forests, what I suppose to be the same species makes a loud neighing sound. These animals in captivity are very quiet for most of the day remaining immersed in a wallow of liquid mud and thickly coated with it after the manner of a buffalo. During the evening and night they are much more active roaming up and down the enclosure. They drink remarkably slowly and only a small quantity at a time, eat very large quantities of food, and pass the excreta always in exactly the same spot and almost always at night as the tapir does.

H. N. R.

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### In Memoriam.

DR. N. B. DENNYS.

The death of Dr. Dennys in Hongkong on Dec. 10th, 1900, will be deeply regretted by all who knew him, and as one of the first members of the Society, all must deeply deplore the loss of one who did so much for the Society in its earlier days. A short notice of his life has appeared in the North Borneo Herald from which I take a few facts as to his history. Nicholas Belfield